

JOSHUA 2-4

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Joshua chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

In our last study we saw the death of Moses and the mantle of leadership was passed on to Joshua.

We saw how God encouraged Joshua not to be afraid, to be strong in the Lord as he is going to lead the children of Israel to boldly go where they have not been before, the Promise Land!

And the chapter concluded with the 2½ tribes who were going to remain on the east side of the Jordan River promise to assist their brethren in the battles in this land of Canaan and then they will return home to the east side of the Jordan River. They will follow Joshua as long as Joshua follows the Lord!

Now they have three days to prepare themselves to enter into the land and as we will see this evening, there is another reason for these three days.

There is a woman in the first city that they were going to conquer named Rahab. And she is a very interesting woman as we will see.

The thing I find fascinating about here is her faith in the true and living God, her faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

In fact, if you really think about it, that is the most important thing in anyone's life, not just Rahab – ***FAITH!***

Paul wrote in Hebrews 11:6, **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

And as we will see with Rahab, this was not an empty faith, but it was a courageous faith!

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Joshua chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

JOSHUA 2

VERSE 1

Like forty years earlier, they are on the boarder of the Promise Land and once again, spies will be sent into the land to check it out before they enter in!

Remember, some forty years earlier Moses tried this and sent 12 spies and 10 came back with a bad report and these 10 discouraged the rest of the nation so much that they refused to enter into the land of promise!

And because of their unbelief, all those who were 20 years old and up, except for Joshua and Caleb, died in the wilderness!

Think about that, out of 603,550 in this age group, only two entered in that were above the age of 20 all because of unbelief! And that was Joshua and Caleb, as I have said!

Now Joshua sends in two spies, maybe he thought he would have better luck with two than twelve!

But I don’t think the reason Joshua sent them in was to gather intelligence information for the battle.

Yes, Joshua sent these two spies into the Promise Land to spy out the city of Jericho, the first place they were to battle with.

Keep in mind that Jericho was a mighty fortress.

It was located some seven miles from the Jordan River. The city consisted of some seven acres, and it was surrounded by a double wall and houses and storage areas were between these walls.

The outer wall was some 6 feet thick and the inner wall was a little wider at 12 feet thick!

The first wall was some 11 feet high, and the second wall was some 35 feet high. And this second outer wall was tilted at a 35-degree angle.

I know, that sounds strange, why did they do that?

Because the way it was tilted, to that degree, it prohibited anyone from scaling the wall with ladders!

So it was a solid city, it would be very difficult to penetrate the walls and get inside!

But again, I don't see this as a military reconnaissance mission. I see God sending in these spies because God had another reason for them to go into Jericho.

How can I be so sure?

Because these men will return with no battle plans, no strategies to defeat the enemy.

As crazy as that sounds, it is true!

Then why did they go in?

I believe God's plan and purpose was for a rescue mission as He was preparing to destroy Jericho.

So I don't see these two men as spies but witnesses and specifically for a woman named Rahab and her family.

What I love here is how this relates to us.

What in the world am I talking about?

Listen carefully!

God is preparing to judge this world and the earth dwellers, and He did not send spies into this world to see how we should defeat it, but He sent us in as witnesses to rescue as many people from the coming judgment!

You see, if you have the wrong perspective, it will cause you to focus on the wrong issues. It is not saving this world, but the people who are in this world!

Here in Joshua, we are told that these two men came to the city of Jericho and stayed at the house of Rahab, who was a harlot. She lived on the wall of the city.

Now let me say this. As you look at the history of Christianity, some Bible commentators have been embarrassed because these two spies went to the house of a prostitute.

So they try to get around that and they will tell you that Rahab was merely an *“innkeeper.”*

It can be interpreted that way but what does the Bible tell us and not man?

Listen to what we are told in Hebrews 11:31, **“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”**

I think that is very clear, she was a harlot, a prostitute, and I am thankful that God uses imperfect people to do His work, and we will see that more in a minute! And, in a sense, she was also an innkeeper! A harlot and an innkeeper?

That may seem odd to us today but many times the harlot’s home was also a place for visitors to stay.

Yes, they did practice their profession there also, but that was not the only reason that people came to stay, as it is with these two spies.

Also, her home was on the wall of the city, easy for everyone to see, to locate, and that many times was the locations of these harlot's homes.

Listen to Origen who wrote back in the second century regarding this event, "***As the first Joshua sent his spies before him and they were received into the harlot's house, so the second Joshua sent his forerunners, whom the publicans and harlots gladly received.***"

That is our Lord, our Joshua. He came to save sinners; He came to save you and me!

Look at how this all plays out because it is amazing to me.

Did you know that Rahab was the great, great grandmother of King David!

You see, Rahab and Salmon had a son named Boaz.

When we get to the book of Ruth, we will see that Boaz marries Ruth and they have a son named Obed.

And Obed had a son who was named Jesse.

And, of course, Jesse had a son named David!

Yes, Joshua sent these men in as spies, but God sent them in as a witness as we will see!

That is why they had the three-day wait before entering into the land. Rahab needed to be rescued!

We often have ideas of why we are doing this or that, but God has a better plan, and it is usually after the fact that we see what God was doing that was far better than what we were doing.

And here's the thing. God uses all kinds of people, not perfect people!

Paul says that in I Corinthians 1:26-29, **“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.”**

Yes, God uses the foolish things of this world to put to shame the wise, to do great things through and in the end, because of that, He gets the glory! He uses people like you and me!

If you doubt that, then listen to the genealogy of Jesus. And this is just looking at the women involved, which is interesting because the men are the ones usually spoken of.

But God wants us to understand that He can use anyone. The women involved in the genealogy of Jesus are,

- *Tamar – sexual immorality, prostitution.*
- *Rahab – prostitution.*
- *Ruth – Moabite.*
- *Bathsheba – adulterous relationship.*

Folks, none of us are worthy to be used by God, but God is gracious and merciful, and He uses imperfect people to fulfill His work. He uses people like you and me, as I have said!

VERSES 2-7

From Jericho they could see the camp of Israel and thus, as they heard that the Jewish spies had entered the city, the city of Jericho went to DefCon 1 - Maximum military readiness.

All forces are active. DefCon 1 is considered to be the ***“total war”*** level!

The city was going under lockdown, no one in or out!

Why did they respond like that?

Because they heard the stories of what God was doing with His people, the victories they had against the other nations, and they rightly believed they were the next target! They were just some seven miles away and they were next, at least that is what they thought. And really, they were right!

So the King, upon hearing of the spies in their city, sends his men to the house of Rahab because that is where visitors would go.

And she lies to these men, she said that they were there, but they left right as the city was going to be locked down! And she encouraged them to go after them and they might catch these two spies!

Think of it like this. She sent the Jericho police on a *wild Jews chase*. Sorry.

The thing is, Rahab knew where these men were; they were hidden on her roof underneath stalks of flax.

Now that may seem strange but that was normal to place these stalks on the roof.

You see, first they would harvest them. Then they would soak them in water for 3 or 4 days so the fibers separated and then they would place them on the roof to dry out.

After they were dried the flax was made into linen cloth.

So it was not uncommon to have these stalks of flax on the roof, the only difference here is that these two spies were hiding under them!

Here is the big question. Is it okay to lie to save a life?

Keep in mind that Jesus said in John 8:44, **“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

So the letter of the law, you might say, is that we should not lie for any reason because we are then following the Devil, who is the father of lies.

I have to admit that I have struggled with this over the years. I have felt that under no circumstances are we to lie.

But what about saving a life?

I don't know if I have come to a conclusion for myself on this. Can God save a person's life apart from me lying?

Of course He can.

But, if troops came to arrest and kill Jews, would I lie about a Jewish person being in my house?

I am not in that situation, but it would be hard for me to say that I would not lie and let them take that Jewish person and kill them!

I think for the most part, none of us are in situations like that and we have to be careful not to justify a lie. We are to be honest.

And I will again let you pray about this because it is not easy, at least for me. But think of it like this and I will move on.

If you take a strict, legalistic approach or application of the Law, you will have to ignore all the different things that we encounter in life.

All I can say, at this point for me, is that you need to let the Holy Spirit help you, help me to apply what is needed in various situations. It would be nice if the answer was black or white, but it is not, that is not how life works!

VERSES 8-14

Do you see how the city of Jericho was terrified because they heard the stories and they realized that they were no match for the God of Israel!

Keep in mind that Rahab was a harlot with her home on the wall of the city and people came there not just for the prostitution that was going on there, but it was like an inn for people to stay at when they traveled.

So with all those people coming and going I am sure they shared the stories of what the children of Israel were doing, the land that they were conquering and now they are on the other side of the Jordan River preparing to cross over!

What God did in the life of Rahab is the same he does in our lives. He saves the sinner!

Not only that but the God who worked in and through the children of Israel is the same God who works in and through us today!

In Acts 17:6 we are told, “**. . . ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’**”

This is not exactly correct. Maybe from the unsaved they saw it like this, but the reality is, apart from Christ this world is upside down and it is only the Lord who can turn it right side up again!

And it is the Lord who uses people like you and me to do that.

We should bring terror to the people of this world because of who we are standing with, the Creator of Heaven and Earth and no one can stand against Him and win!

And I do think that the world is afraid of Christians, that is why they are coming down so hard upon us, and we see the martyrdom of so many around the world. They want to destroy us so they can continue in their sin!

But the gates of Hell will not prevail over the Church that God has established! May our lives show the power of God and impact those around us for Jesus!

I believe that Rahab is saved at this point. She has renounced her faith in the god's that the people of Jericho were worshiping.

She has committed treason with her own people to serve the living God.

In saying all that, we need to think about this for a minute.

Was Rahab the harlot saved by her good works?

Absolutely not!

Keep in mind that she was a harlot and I know that some would say that her actions with the two spies were her good works that saved her, but I disagree.

Her good works didn't save her. No, the evidence for her faith was her good works! She was saved by faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

That is what we read in Hebrews chapter 11!

Think of it like this. She knew who God was. She also knew who she was, a harlot, a sinner. And she placed her life into the hands of the living God to save her!

That is the same for us today.

Yes, her faith was not perfect, but she did believe, and she was young in the faith.

And notice that she is going to leave that old life behind and follow God, follow God's people, just what God desires of us today!

VERSES 15-21

Joshua, the leader of the children of Israel is coming to bring judgment upon the inhabitants of Jericho.

And he is also coming as a savior to all who are in the house of Rahab and there is a scarlet cord or line that is placed in her window by faith.

One writer put it like this regarding the faith of Rahab. He wrote,

Rahab's belief in the God of Israel was confirmed by her actions. She protected and assisted the Israelite spies because she really believed in the greatness of Yahweh and the reliability of His promise to Israel. In this sense, she was justified by her faith-filled works (James 2:25).

- David Guzik, Joshua 2

Now here's the thing. For us today, Jesus, our Joshua, is coming back to judge the inhabitants of this earth, the earth dwellers but He is also coming back to save us from this coming judgment.

Who will be rescued?

All who believe by faith in the Messiah and have applied the scarlet line or His blood upon their life by faith, they are rescued.

That is what Jesus said in Revelation 3:10, “**Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.**”

I know that some feel we go through all or part of the Tribulation Period, but as you read this, you can clearly see that is not true.

First of all, for believers, Jesus is saying that He is going to keep us from this hour of trial!

Not only that, He tells us that this judgment is going to be upon the whole world, to those who are earth dwellers.

Again, some like to say that we live on this earth and thus, we must be involved in this Tribulation Period, this judgment of God.

We are not of this world, you might say. You see, our citizenship is in heaven and thus, we are in the world but not of the world!

So I hope that helps you see that we are not part of this judgment just as Rahab will not be a part of this judgment that is coming upon Jericho.

What is interesting here in Joshua 2:18 is that the Hebrew word for “**line**” is first used here in Joshua and all the other times it is used in the Scriptures it is translated “**hope.**”

What’s my point?

What I see here is that the scarlet hope that saves us, saves sinners is Jesus. Obviously, they had not seen that yet, but now we do.

And, apart from the blood there is only judgment, but we have hope that His blood cleanses us from our sins.

In fact, John tells us in Revelation 1:5-6, **“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Now, in regard to this hope, Dr. W. A. Criswell wrote, *“Rahab the harlot is an example of the grace of God at work. Her salvation was not based on her character or merits: she lived in a doomed city, practiced a condemned profession, engaged in subversive activities, and falsified [lied about] her actions. Nevertheless she acted upon faith, and was spared the judgment of God which was executed at the hands of the Israelites.”*

Thus, her faith causes her to act and place the scarlet line or hope in her window so the invading army could see it and spare her and those who are in her home.

And her love for her family is so strong that she will bring them into her home, under the protection of the blood you might say.

And yes, some may have felt it was foolish to place their faith in this scarlet hope, but all who entered in, were saved and those that did not died in the judgment!

VERSES 22-24

Again, let me ask you what military strategy these two spies brought back with them?

As I have said earlier, absolutely nothing!

Then what did they bring back?

What they did bring back were words of encouragement because if Jericho falls, all the land is theirs just as God promised them.

Fear had come upon the inhabitants of Canaan and specifically Jericho and the faith of the children of Israel was growing as they were learning to walk by faith and not by sight and we will see that even more specifically in Joshua chapter 3.

Not only did they bring back those words of encouragement, but they saw the salvation of a harlot named Rahab!

One writer put it like this. He wrote, ***“The salvation of Rahab is an example of what God would have done for others also. The king and the other citizens of Jericho knew all that she knew, but they did not turn to Israel’s God for mercy. The fear that drove her to beg for mercy drove them in their stubborn rebellion. Accordingly, the others are called ‘the disobedient’ in Hebrews 11:3.”*** (Madvig)

All had the opportunity but not all came to God by faith and in their rebellion they died. And the same is true today. All have the opportunity to get saved, but not all will receive that free gift of life and in their rebellion, they will die in their sins!

Remember that 40 years earlier the report of the 10 of the 12 spies was bad, they couldn’t do it, their cities were fortified, there were giants in the land, Jupiter was not aligned with Mars or whatever excuses they could think of so they didn’t have to walk by faith.

Thus, fear paralyzed them, and they refused to walk. It wasn’t that they couldn’t walk; they just refused because of unbelief!

Now, 40 years later we see that this next generation has grown, they are willing to walk by faith as they trust in the Lord.

What about you?

Has the situation or situations that you are facing paralyzed you to the point that you refuse to walk?

If so, bring it to the Lord and walk by faith. Trust in Him and walk as he is leading.

Learn to walk by faith and not by sight!

One last point here.

Do you think those two spies entered Jericho thinking they would see someone saved there, especially a harlot?

Obviously not!

My point is this. There may be family, there may be friends, there may be co-workers that you are not expecting to see saved, it seems hopeless and yet, it can happen!

He saved Rahab and He saved you and me! All He wants you to do is walk by faith and see what He will do in you and through you for His glory!

JOSHUA 3

VERSES 1-2

This is not an additional three days as some may think. Joshua is recapping for us the events leading up to their camping at the Jordan River. You see, Acacia grove or Shittim was located about 7 miles east of the Jordan River.

Here is what is taking place. The spies were in the land spying on Jericho or really on a rescue mission for Rahab as we have seen.

And the rest of the nation was there at the Jordan River for those three days!

As they sat there on the banks of the Jordan River keep in mind that the time of year was spring.

It is during the spring, with the spring rains and the melting of the snow from Mount Hermon that this river swells up and overflows its banks.

Normally the Jordan River spills some 6 million tons of water into the Dead Sea per day and normally it is only some 100 feet wide and not very deep.

But at this time of year, with this increased water supply, it could be as wide as a mile now, obviously overflowing its banks!

But can you imagine them sitting there on the banks of the Jordan River, it was a dream coming true as they are about to enter into the Promise Land.

And yet, they had to wait and that is true for us as well. We must wait upon the Lord, allow Him to lead us in His time.

Not only that but trying to cross over the Jordan River this time of year with all those people and children and animals, impossible!

They were learning to trust the Lord to see them through the Jordan River!

Think about that. How in the world are they going to get 2 to 3 million people across this river and to the other side?

I will tell you.

Joshua called an emergency meeting of the Army Corps of Engineers to come up with a solution!

No, he didn't do that because the answer to their problem was not going to come from the wisdom of man but by the power of God!

Folks, as impossible as a situation may be to us, Jesus said, “... **‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’**” Matthew 19:26.

This again was not going to be done by the power of man, because of his intellect, but by God and thus, they were to wait three days by this river.

You see, **“But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”** Isaiah 40:31.

They spent three days contemplating what they were going to do, trying to rectify in their minds how this was going to happen, how they would get across this river and now it was time for God to work.

I am sure that many of them had to come to the conclusion they couldn't accomplish this on their own. That is where they needed to be, and it is where we need to be. We have come to the end of our resources and now all we can do is trust in the Lord. As funny as that sounds, many times that is what it takes for us to turn and trust in Him!

It is as Paul tells us regarding our strength and what God can do in those who are weak in II Corinthians 12:10, **“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”**

May we look to Him to be the strength of our life!

So how are they going to do this?

Let's read on and see!

VERSES 3-4

Let me ask you this question.

What does Joshua mean when he says that **“you have not passed this way before”**?

During their wilderness wanderings they were led by the Shekinah glory or the presence of God.

In Exodus 13:21-22 we are told, **“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”**

The visible presence of God was directing them.

When the pillar of fire or the cloud moved, they moved. When that pillar of fire or the cloud stopped, then they stopped!

But now they are going to learn to walk by faith and not by sight. In other words, God was going to lead them a new way, a way that they had not known before!

How were they going to do that?

The same way we do today!

You see, the Ark of the Covenant was to lead them now.

What was inside the Ark of the Covenant?

Inside the Ark of the Covenant was the Ten Commandments or the Word of God.

What is my point?

My point is this. No longer was there going to be a visible sign to lead them but the Word of God would be directing their steps!

Remember what the Lord told Joshua in chapter 1, **“Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”**

Joshua 1:6-9.

Tragically today people once again want to be led by a visible sign and they negate the Word of God.

That is tragic and that is why so many bizarre ideas have come into the church because we have no plum line, or we have no direction outside of God’s Word. Now it is this experience over here. It is how I feel about this. And they miss the most important thing – ***IT IS WRITTEN!***

Also note that they were to stay about 5/8 of a mile behind the Ark of the Covenant, why?

I think to show respect for the Ark, the Lord sat above the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies and thus, reverence for the holiness of God!

But also, so it could be clearly seen by all.

Again, what is my point?

My point is this. Today we see God’s Word covered by so much garbage that people cannot clearly see it. They put so much psychobabble, earthly philosophy that it is no wonder that people can’t walk today, they don’t know where they are going!

VERSE 5

The battles that they were facing were not going to be physical battles but spiritual battles that would manifest themselves in physical ways.

Thus, they needed to sanctify themselves, to set themselves apart unto God, for His use, that their entire lives would be placed in His hand for His use!

In other words, take your eyes off the physical and focus on the Lord and see the salvation He will bring to the situation!

Paul put it like this in Romans 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [or spiritual worship].”**

By surrendering our will to His will is a form of worship unto God!

VERSE 6

I find this interesting. They crossed over the Jordan River during the time of the barley harvest, in the month of Nisan, which corresponds to our March/April.

And it was the 10th day of the month Nisan that they crossed over.

We call it Palm Sunday when Jesus rode through Jerusalem as the Messiah.

How do I know that?

Because in Joshua 4:19 we are told, **“Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.”**

And in Joshua 5:10 we are told, **“Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.”**

Just an interesting coincidence? I don't think so!

VERSES 7-8

God was going to show the people that Joshua was His man and their leader and in Joshua 4:14 we see how it played out, **“On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.”**

We also see Joshua tell the priests who bore the ark of the Covenant that they will be standing in the midst of the Jordan River. Not sure what they were thinking when they heard that considering that the waters were roaring downstream!

But we will see how that all plays out and the faith of these priests as we read on.

VERSES 9-17

The name **“Jordan”** means, ***“judging”*** and it is the place where we must judge and put to death the flesh.

You see, the Jordan represented death to self.

Remember what Paul said in Galatians 2:20, **“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”**

Thus, as they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land, the land of Canaan, it represents the new life, the life of the Spirit.

Paul said in Romans chapter 6, **“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.”** Romans 6:4-7.

Thus, the crossing of the Jordan represents death to the life of the flesh and entering into the life of the Spirit.

Make no mistake, like with the Red Sea, the standing still of the waters here in the Jordan River was a miracle, not an earthquake that dammed them up for a time. There is no record of that.

In fact, here in Joshua 3:17 we read that the priests, **“stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.”**

Thus, like the crossing of the Red Sea not the Sea of Reeds, the crossing of the Jordan River was a miracle of God.

Imagine once again, some 2 to 3 million people crossing over on dry land.

The priests could have been standing in the midst of the Jordan River for hours and hours before the last person crossed over!

But it was a step of faith on their part, for these priests had to step in before the waters were stopped and could you imagine the noise of those waters as they were held back and the sight it was.

Here's the thing. As pastors and teachers today, we too need to step forward with the Word of God and let people take those steps of faith as we lead the way!

Instead of looking at physical solutions to our spiritual problems, may we look to the Lord and see the work He can and wants to do in our lives!

JOSHUA 4

VERSES 1-9

All the children of Israel had crossed over the Jordan River, into the Promise Land.

Now Joshua tells one member from each of the 12 tribes of Israel to gather a stone from the midst of the river and place it on the land, in Gilgal, as a memorial to what the Lord has done!

Keep in mind that there were battles to fight in the land and Gilgal was to be their headquarters for all their combat missions.

Thus, as they prepared for battle, they would see this memorial to encourage them in the battle that they were about to face.

If God had done this for them in the past, He surely will continue to see them through in the present situations they are facing and that would be an encouragement to them!

Also, they were to be a testimony to future generations to show what God had done. That is important folks.

How often do we see future generations turn away from God because they have not seen the things that God is doing in our lives. We need to let them see the power of God, the truth of God, the faithfulness of God working in our lives to encourage them to walk by faith!

In Joshua 4:9 does it speak of placing 12 stones in the midst of the Jordan River? If that is what it is saying, who would be able to see that?

Here is the key to that and I have missed this before. It also says that these stones were to be placed **“where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood . . .”**

You see, they were not placed in the middle of the Jordan River but where the water met the land and thus, where the priests stepped into the water as they too were a memorial for everyone to see!

VERSES 10-18

In Joshua 4:12-13 we see Ruben, Gad, and the ½ tribe of Manasseh send their representative armies.

The rest of the people from these tribes remained on the east side of the Jordan River to protect their families.

The population of males in those tribes 20 years old and up totaled some 110,550 since we can't take all the tribe of Manasseh, for only half remained on the east side of the Jordan River. (Numbers 26:7, 18, 34)

That means some 40,000 soldiers that came to fight represented about 36% of the adult population. It would make sense that they needed to keep some of the fighting men back to help protect their families while they were fighting in the Promise Land with their brethren, but that would not be a problem if they would have entered into the Promise Land!

Again, they were being faithful to what they had promised to Moses, that they would fight with their brothers, to defeat their enemies, and then they would return to their homes on the east side of the Jordan River, opposite the Land of Promise.

I can't imagine the noise, the roaring thunder as these waters of the Jordan River began to flow once again downstream! What a sight for the children of Israel and I wonder what the people of Jericho were thinking when that heard that thunderous noise!

And I wonder if they could see the heap of waters piled up as the children of Israel were crossing over!

VERSES 19-20

As they set up their base camp in Gilgal, the first thing they do is set-up these memorial stones as a witness of what God has done, the great works of God to encourage the people in the work that was ahead.

VERSES 21-24

Men, I am sorry, but it is your responsibility to teach your children the things of God by your words and your deeds!

I think we many times teach them about football, baseball, computer games and-so-on, but do we put that much time and effort in teaching them the things of God? We tend to leave that to the wife and that should not be. Not that they can't teach the children, but the father is responsible for doing this!

And here's the thing. Do they see that the Lord is the most important thing in your life or do other things cloud the picture? Again, please understand ladies that I am not saying that you don't train your children in the things of God, you do. But I think today, many men are falling short of their responsibilities and not testifying of the great things that our God has done!

What about these memorial stones? Do they even relate to us? I think they do!

Yes, those memorial stones were dead but folks, we are living stones, a witness not only to our children, but also to the world.

Look again at Joshua 4:24, **“that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.”**

You see, they were to be a witness to the world!

Peter makes this point about us in I Peter chapter 2 as he wrote, **“you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . . But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”** I Peter 2:5, 9-10.

Notice now what the Lord is doing – He is building a spiritual Temple not with stones or brick, but living stones, you and me!

We are told in I Kings 6:7 as Solomon’s Temple was being built, **“And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.”**

Thus, as you are going through this life and you feel like you are getting hammered, you feel like there goes another chip off the old block, understand what the Lord is doing!

He is working on you down here in the quarry of life hammering and chipping away so that when you get to heaven there will be no sound of a hammer or chisel, you will fit in perfectly!

Now here is the thing. With all these privileges that God has given to us, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, having obtained the mercy of God, we are now to go out and proclaim what God has done in our lives, praise Him and let others see what God has done in us and through us so others may enter in!

But those who don't will be judged for their disobedience, for their rejection of Jesus.

The problem today is many people think of God as getting pleasure in destroying the wicked. That He can't wait to put them to death.

That is not the heart of God.

Listen to what He says in Ezekiel chapter 18, “**Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?**” Says the LORD GOD, ‘**And not that he should turn from his ways and live?**’ . . . ‘**For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,**’ Says the LORD GOD.’ **Therefore turn and live!**” Ezekiel 18:23, 32.

That is the heart of God and His desire for our lives is that we would be living stones, memorial stones to what God has done in our lives and we are to point people to Him, to Jesus!